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SERMON  
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Dr. BEVERIDGE's  
S E R M O N  
Before the *A*  
C O N V O C A T I O N  
E N G L I S H ' D.

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United States Library  
MONTANA

THE BEVERIDGE

SERMON

Before the

CONVOCATION

ENGLISH

# A SERMON

Preach'd before the  
CONVOCATION

OF THE

**Bishops and Clergy**

OF THE

Province of *Canterbury* at *Westminster*,  
*Novemb. the 18th. 1689.*

By *WILLIAM BEVERIDGE*, Arch-  
deacon of *Colchester*.

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Printed in Latin By the Bishops Command.

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Made English by *J. G.* a Member of the Church  
*Joseph of England. Godfrey. M.D.*

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The second Edition corrected and amended.

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*Let ancient Customs still take place. Syn. Nic. Can. 6.*

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*Licens'd and Entred.*

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*London*, Printed for *N. R.* and *J. Bullord* at the Old Black  
Bear in *St. Pauls Church-Yard*, 1689.

SE R M O N

CONVOCATION

of the

University of Cambridge

IN WILLIAM BARR

1689  
+ B571  
S

of the University of Cambridge

The Second Edition

London Printed for M. R. and T. W. at the Old Bailey

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TO THE  
AUTHOR.

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Reverend Sir,

**P**ERUSING your Learned  
Discourse, lately Preach'd be-  
fore the Sacred Synod, and  
finding in it such admirable Matter, so  
accurately handled, and so suitable  
to this present Age, (wherein the best  
Church, and Religion in the World  
wou'd be in great danger of being Cru-  
cify'd, like their blessed Author, were they  
not maintain'd, and defended by such  
Props, as You) that I thought 'twou'd

A not

not be amiss to render it into English  
for the benefit of those, who understand  
not the Latin Tongue, and being well  
assur'd, 'twou'd be very acceptable to  
the English Reader, as coming from  
You, whose known Candour, and Sweet-  
ness of temper ( I doubt not ) will par-  
don my presumption in this Attempt,  
which I fear, has not escap'd the too  
common fate of all such sublime, and  
excellent Subjects, that is, to be foul'd,  
and sullied by ill Version. However  
such as it is, it's humbly presented by  
him, who is

S I R,

Your most oblig'd and  
devoted Servant,

J. G.

A  
S E R M O N

Before the

CONVOCATION, &c.

I Cor. XI. 16.

*But if any Man seem to be contentious,  
we have no such custom, neither the  
Churches of God.*

WITH how many, and how great  
Controversies the Church of *Eng-  
land* now a-days is exercis'd, and  
with how potent, and likewise ma-  
licious Enemies surrounded, we all  
indeed see and grievously resent ; but we don't  
wonder, as being well assur'd, that this has been  
almost the constant, and perpetual fate of Christ's  
Church, wheresoever constituted. For if we peruse  
all the Ecclesiastick Histories, deriv'd down to us from

the very times of the Apostles, we shall find no Age, wherein the Catholick Church has not been molested, either by Hereticks, or Schismatics, or both together. That is to say, Tares are sown by the Enemy amongst the Wheat in the Lord's ground, and they'll grow together till the harvest. But truly such is the love of our God to his Ground, such the benevolence of the Almighty towards his Church, that he'll ne're permit the Wheat to be quite suffocated by the Tares, the Evangelical Doctrine by Heresy, and Discipline by Schism. And therefore we have no reason to fear our Church's sustaining so many Assaults of its Adversaries, seeing 'tis buoy'd up by an omnipotent God, as a pure, and sound Member of his Universal Church.

But truly the purer, and sounder our Church is, and therefore the more acceptable to God, the more, and fiercer Enemies it has among Men, who from one side to t'other set themselves wholly against it, and if they can't destroy, at least Endeavour to disturb it. For on the one hand Papists, on the other Sectaries traduce, peck at, and wound it in their words, and actions; they try all ways to obtrude their new Fangles and Ceremonies on us, and that so they may either utterly supplant, or corrupt our Church.

But we in the mean while relying on Divine assistance, fly to God alone, daily beseeching him in the name of his only begotten Son, that he wou'd vouchsafe to defend, and maintain a Church of his own making. And God has been so propitious to our

our

our Prayers, contrary to our Deserts, that he has now wonderfully deliver'd Us at least from one sort of our Adversaries, to wit, the Papists, and has given us reason to hope, that they'll ne're be capacitated again to infest our Church.

But even now one part remains, who tho' seemingly of the same Faith, and Doctrin, yet being seduc'd either by Ignorance, or Error, or peradventure some scruple of Conscience, alledge I know not what crimes against the Discipline, and Rites of our Church, and for that reason refuse Communion with us in God's Worship. And 'tis strange, how great mischiefs may arise from this apparently small beginning? For hence it is that Altars are erected against Altars; hence proceed Factionous combinations, & Mutual Hatreds among Brethren; hence 'tis that God's Worship is neglected, and the very Sacraments, one being thrust into corners, the other very seldom celebrated; hence it is, I am amaz'd to speak, that impious words are rashly spoken against God, and against all Religion, as if it rather did afford matter for Discord, than Peace; hence lastly those popular Tumults, which threaten both Church, and State, and thereon perpetually disquiet both.

Now that some remedy at length may be opportunely apply'd even to these diseases, under which our Church has so long groan'd, His most Serene Majesty has been pleased, doubtless by Divine inspiration, to assemble the Bishops, and whole Clergy of this Kingdom, that they may consult by what

A 3 methods

methods these pernicious differences may at last be so compos'd, that our Church may lose nothing of its Purity, & Glory; nothing of its Authority, and Right, & yet they who dissent from us, may be reduc'd to our Holy Communion, or at least remain for ever destitute of all reasons, I don't say just, which they never had, but of all specious colours, which hitherto they have pretended for their Separation.

I confess, that this is a great, and very difficult undertaking, but as pious as necessary, and therefore worthy of the utmost endeavours of the whole Clergy of the Church of *England*. And how great soever the Labour and Work may be, although not less than to strive against the Stream, yet we must not despair, if so that God be present, and influence our undertakings. And indeed we have so often experienc'd his singular Providence in defending our Church, that we have no reason to doubt, but that He will be present and propitious to our Importunities for it; whilst all things are directed according to His Divine Will reveal'd to us in Holy Writ: Which both we, and our Dissenting Brethren unanimously hold to be the Supream rule, whereby all Ecclesiastical Controversies are to be judg'd.

Now if we consult these Sacred Oracles, we shall find all things in them necessary for the obtaining Eternal Salvation. But not so many things touching the external Polity of the Church, much less particular Rites necessarily requisite for it: For truly God has left these to be us'd in every particular Church, according to those general Rules he has deliver'd

deliver'd in the Holy Scriptures for that purpose: Such are, Let all things be done decently, and in order; Let all things be done for Edification: And others of the like nature, with which the usual Rites of our Church seem exactly to agree.

But what if a Contention shou'd arise between two Provincial Churches, or between divers Members of the same Province concerning any Ceremony, have we no Precept, nor Example in the Holy Scriptures, to stifle it? 'Tis true, we have an Example, and that such, that it shou'd have even the force of a Precept, in as much as 'tis prescrib'd by the Holy Spirit of God; and upon this account committed to Sacred Writ, that it might be observ'd by all. But lest I shou'd seem to speak this for nothing, I think 'twill not be amiss to note, & explain briefly that of the Apostle, which we just now cited; especially since nothing can be of greater use, & more necessary to be observ'd in all such Controversies as are to be discuss'd by this Sacred Synod.

Therefore in the place you are to take notice, That there were among the Disturbers of the *Corinthian* Church newly settled, those who contended that 'twas decent for Men to be conversant in Publick Meetings, with their Heads vail'd or cover'd, but Women unvail'd or uncover'd: Now the Apostle in this Chapter, from the First to the 16th Verse, copiously reasons against this Custom, which some at that time began to introduce; & shews that the contrary ought to be observ'd every where. He argues first from Divine Testimony, not indeed directly, but by consequence, for as much



as it appears from the Word of God, that Man is the Image and Glory of God, and the Head of the Woman, but the Woman the Glory of the Man, made of Him, and for Him. The Apostle largely handles this Argument to the Twelfth Verse, and then takes another from the Law of Nature, and the common Consent, & Custom of Men. *Judge in your selves* (says he) *is it comely that a Woman pray unto God uncover'd? Doth not even nature it self teach you? &c.*

But in the last place, he produces his clearest Argument compris'd in these words, *But if any Man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.*

Which is the same as if he had said, But if any Man is so contentious, as notwithstanding these Reasons, still to contend, that 'tis lawful for a Man even cover'd, but a Woman uncover'd, publickly to pray unto God; yet there's one Argument behind, by which both he and all Christians must of necessity confess themselves convicted, which is this, *That we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God*: Now amongst us and all other Churches of God, the quite contrary Custom hath obtain'd, whereby Men are taught to uncover, but Women to cover their Heads, whensoever they join in the Service of God.

I know that these words of the Apostle are a little otherwise interpreted by some: as if he affirm'd thus, (*viz.*) That neither they, nor the Churches of God have such a Custom, to contend  
about



about Matters of this nature. But besides that, admitting this Exposition, the Apostle would contradict himself; because in this very place he sharply disputes with the *Corinthians*: Again, if we should grant, that the Words may be thus expounded, it equally makes for our side; because 'tis evident, even from this very sense of the words, as well as the other, which is the true and genuine, and so conspicuous and manifest, that it requires no further explication, that the Apostle disputing concerning an Ecclesiastick Ceremony with the *Corinthian Church*, appeals to the Custom of the other Churches of God. Nevertheless, this one thing we may note, That these words, *οὐ καὶ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς θεοῦ*, are read in some Greek Manuscripts in the singular Number, *οὐ καὶ ἡ ἐκκλησία τῆς θεοῦ*. So also the Syrian Interpreter reads it, for he turns *ܐܠܗܐ ܕܕܢܗܝܪܐ* *neque Ecclesia Dei*, Which are also the words of the Vulgar Latin Version; and the same is to be seen in St. *Cyprian*; and other Latin Fathers. But the sense is all one. For *ἡ ἐκκλησία* in the singular, denotes the Universal Church, under which all Churches are included; and *αἱ ἐκκλησίαι*, in the plural, tho' indefinitely put, signify all the Churches, of which the Universal consists. Therefore both ways, recourse is had here to the Universal Church, and the Argument is drawn from her Custom. For this reason St. *Theodore* says of it, *ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκλησία ἀρκεῖ πρὸς τὴν λύσιν τῶν διαφορῶν*, this Argument is sufficient to confute even the most contentious. For the Apostle shews, That not only he, but all the Churches of God think the same! So

that he that acts contrary, opposes *not* the Universal Church, as *Theophylact*, and before him *St. Chrysostom*, comments upon the place.

These Words of the Apostle being thus concisely explain'd, sets-shew a plain and safe way to us, by which we may proceed in the determination of all such Cases. Now if any Rite us'd by some Provincial Church, is controverted, we must make a diligent Enquiry into the Sentiments of all other Churches, and see whether the same has been us'd by them. For the illustration whereof, we must observe, That in all Ages even from our Saviour's Passion, several Provincial Churches have been constituted in the greatest part of the World; which all together make that one Church, which we therefore commonly call Catholic or Universal. Which doubtless, must be computed from all the Churches, not only those that exist at one and the same point of time, but that ever had a being.

Moreover, all these in all Ages, and at all times, have agreed with the Church in necessary Articles of Faith. Now as to Rites, they have been partly proper, and peculiar to particular Churches, partly common to all. Rites that are proper to one or two Churches, may be abrogated, or retain'd by the same, and also rejected, or admitted by others at pleasure. For they put on the nature of things

things indifferent, and therefore are of no force, unless what they receive from that Church by whose Authority they are established. But Rites that have been always common to the Universal Church, that is, to all Churches throughout all Ages, or which is all one, to the greatest part of them, the very same ought still to be observed by every particular Church. For neither is it in the power of every particular Church, either to reject Rites when observ'd, or observe them when rejected by the Universal. If any of these shall do either of the two, 'tis Schismatical, disjoining it self from the Body of Christ, at least in that particular. But that every Church may be rightly constituted, so as to be made a sound Member of the Catholic, 'tis absolutely necessary for her to conform her self to that in all things, as long as it may be done, and religiously embrace her Discipline and Rites, as well as her Doctrine. Which, lest I may seem to speak without reason, I'll confirm with the following Arguments.

These very Words of my Text supply us with one. For certainly the *Carthian* was a Provincial Church, into which some endeavour'd to bring some new Rite. The Apostle being inform'd of this, disputes against it in this place, and proves that that Church could by no means admit of it. And his last and chief Argument he draws from the Cal

tom of the Universal Church, as we observ'd before: Forasmuch as all other Churches should have no such, but a quite contrary Custom. But if any many (says he) seem to be contentious, we have no such custom; neither the Churches of God. From which words he thus argues:

*What's contrary to the receiv'd Custom of all other Churches, ought not to be admitted by the Corinthian.*

*But this is contrary to the receiv'd Custom of all other Churches.*

*Ergo.*

Now if the Church of Corinth, was not oblig'd to, accommodate her self to, and observe the Rites of all the other Churches, this Argument of the Apostle would be of no weight, or moment. For by this supposition, that Church might have admitted that Rite, notwithstanding 'twas contrary to a Custom Universally receiv'd: And therefore the major proposition would be false. But undoubtedly the Apostle argued rightly. For he was divinely inspir'd, when he pen'd these Words, which is a powerful reason. So that he cou'd neither deceive by the Argument, nor be deceiv'd in the manner of arguing. And therefore a principal reason obliges every such Provincial Church, as the Corinthian was, diligently to observe the Rites of all the other or the Universal. For if any neglect the observance of them, he is by this infallible Argument, convinc'd of a grievous Error and Schism. Neither is it possible for him to defend himself by any Pre-

tence:

tence: since God himself dictated this Argument to the Apostle, and from thence also it necessarily follows, That 'tis the Will of God that every Provincial Church should conform to the Universal: And also that we always use this way of arguing which he has taught us, to determine all Controversies of the like nature.

Moreover, the same appears from the very nature and notion of a Church: For the Church generally so call'd, is a vast Society, or Congregation of Men professing the Christian Faith in all parts of the World: Whereof Provincial Churches are so many Parts or Members. Now in all such Societies every Part ought to agree with its whole: And consequently the lesser with the greater. Reason tells us this; The Law of nature commands it; and the Universal consent of Mankind judges it necessary. So that, if any thing enacted by the greater, obliges the remaining part, much more what is ordain'd by the greatest part of each Society; which the lesser ought to observe if it wou'd continue a member, and enjoy the Priviledges of the same Society. Which rule, since it prevails in all manner of Societies, ought much more in the Church; which of all things should be the most Regular.

Accordingly Christ himself is the head of this Church, call'd Universal, who equally diffuses his Spirit

Spirit thro' all its parts. The Apostle in the Epistle to the *Ephesians*, and elsewhere in many places explains this idea, or notion of the Church. Seeing therefore the Spirit of Christ himself is diffused thro' all the Members of this Body, and both guides, and governs them, whatsoever is performed by all these Members let it be (as it ought) ascrib'd to His Holy Spirit. For altho' each Member may be perhaps liable to something of human Infirmary, yet that which all the Parts of the Church have conjunctly and always Establish'd, could scarcely proceed from any thing less than a common (as I may so say) Principle of all things, namely, the Spirit of God, who generally actuates all things. And therefore it can't but be necessary to be still observ'd (as much as may be) by every Member.

The next Argument on this occasion is fetcht from the Apostolical Institution of all such Rites, which are observ'd by the Universal Church. For whatsoever the Apostles in the first institution of the Churches deliver'd for their observation, is undoubtedly necessary to their legitimate constitution. For otherwise they must have appointed something superfluous, which can't be alledg'd against the Apostles, considering they have instituted nothing in the Church, but what was commission'd them by Heaven. Which since all Christians believe, they agree in nothing more, than that the Apostolical Institution



of the Churches is a Rule, and Measure, according to which every present Church is to be model'd. So that no Constitution of any Church can be accounted Legitimate, unless it be consonant thereto. Now this being granted, it follows that no particular Church is lawfully constituted, unless it observes all the Rites of the Universal. For whatsoever she hath observed in all ages, must be of Apostolical Institution. For how is it possible for any one to imagine, that all the Churches dispersed over the face of the Earth shou'd every where use the same modes, unless they received them together with their Faith by Apostolick Tradition?

'Tis very clear, that the Apostles went about almost all Parts, and appointed Churches, where ever they came: 'Tis clear that they were conducted by the same Spirit: And lastly 'tis clear, that they endeavour'd Uniformity in all Churches. And therefore 'tis no wonder, if they have every where ordain'd the same Rites: 'Twou'd have rather been a wonder, if they had done otherwise. Now if such general Rites were not by Apostolical appointment, how cou'd they every where come into Churches so far distant from each other? Cou'd they from General Councils? For that only remains to be spoken to: For they must of necessity either be ordain'd by the Apostles, or by Oecumenical Councils, as *St. Augustin* observes in his Epistle to *Jannarius*, wherein he says, *We preserve things not written, but deliver'd,*

*deliver'd, which are indeed observ'd all the World over; whereby we may understand, that things recommended, and decreed either by the Apostles, or General Councils, (whose authority the Church venerates) are retain'd. Now we in this place speak only of such Rites, as were observ'd by the Universal Church before General Councils had their being, and which for this reason cou'd not be instituted by them. It remains therefore, that we attribute them only to Apostolical Institution, according to that common rule of the same Learned Father, who says, That the Universal Church holds, not what's instituted by Councils, but always retain'd, which being deliver'd not otherwise than by Apostolical Authority, is most rightly believed. Therefore since 'tis necessary to legitimate the Constitution of every Church, that the Rites instituted by the Apostles be retain'd: And since all the Rites of the Universal are appointed by the Apostles themselves, none can doubt, but that the observing the same is necessarily requir'd to the Legal Constitution of every particular Church.*

And this indeed is not my private Opinion, but is, and ever was the common Sentiment of all Christians, especially the Primitive. This appears from hence, that in times past, if any Controversy arose concerning any Ecclesiastical Rite, which some peculiar Church had receiv'd, 'twas always customary to enquire into the Practice of the Universal; and her constant Usage touching that Rite, and afterwards to give in their Verdict.

Examples



Examples are very obvious. I'll chuse one for the present. The Primitive Church, you all know, was long perplex'd with a grievous Contention concerning the time of the celebration of the Passover. For the Church of *Asia* contended that 'twas to be celebrated after the manner of the *Jews*, on the fourteenth day after the appearance of the Moon, let it fall on whatsoever day of the Week it would. Now all other Churches were wont to end their fast, and celebrate that Feast only on the day of our Lord's Resurrection. This controversie continued for many Years, till at length 'twas complain'd of in the general Council held at *Nice*. Where 'twas prov'd, that all other Churches, except that of *Asia*, us'd to celebrate that Feast on the Lord's day, *Kai tere omeri*, and for that reason all the Fathers that were present at that Synod, thought it fit, and reasonable, for the *Asian* Church to celebrate it on the same day: As the great Emperor, *Constantine*, expressly asserts in an Epistle to the Churches, by whose command that Synod was summon'd. From whence it appears that the *Nicene* Fathers us'd the same argument against the *Asian* Church, that the Apostle do's against the *Corinthian*, which he deduces from the Custom of all the other Churches. Also St. *Cyprian* has the same against *Novatian*, and St. *Augustin* against the *Donatists*: But *Epiphanius* brings it against all Hereticks, and likewise Schismaticks, condemning them all of Heresie; that either in Doctrine or Discipline depart

from the Universal Church. I might seem too prolix, and tedious, if I should but point out all the Councils, and Fathers, that have us'd this argument; and therefore our Proposition may well be inferr'd from them. For this Argument, which the Catholick Church has always us'd, takes for granted, that 'tis at least just, and rational, that all her rites shou'd be every where retain'd.

Upon which account we have more largely prosecuted this subject, because it may open to us a plain way to repress, when occasion serves, all the adversaries of our Church; even the *Romanists* themselves, who assuming the Name of Catholicks, do insolently pride themselves in it. For the *Romish* Church whose Faith, and Customs all Papists are solemnly engag'd to maintain, hath invented so many new Tenets, and lately innovated so many superstitious Ceremonies, either rejected, or unknown to the Universal, and is at this day so imperious in her commands of them, that she deserves only the name of a most corrupted, much less Catholick Church. For she has nothing common with the Catholick, nothing with all other Churches, but rather all things Dissentaneous, and Repugnant, excepting, wherein she agrees with ours.

But passing by these things, as not pertinent to this place, let's rather see that those things, which we have hitherto discours'd, conduce to the

the right effecting the Business in hand.

Now then, 'tis apparent from what we have already premis'd, how expedient it is, that Ancient Rites and Customs observ'd hitherto by the Universal, shou'd also now be observ'd by every particular Church. 'Tis even so in Bodies Politick. As for instance, in this very Kingdom there are divers Corporations, Burroughs, and other inferiour Fraternities, all which are impower'd to give Laws to themselves, and to their Members, Provided always, they neither do, nor enact any thing *Contrary to the Statutes of this Realm, or (as we say) to the Common Law, or any ancient Custom, that has been introduc'd, and receiv'd in this Kingdom time out of mind, and so has obtain'd the force of a Law.* Almost after the same manner the Universal Church, which is the Kingdom of Christ, has it's Decrees written in the Word of God, and also has as it were a Common Law, consisting of some certain Rites. Which tho' they be not expressly, and in just so many words, commanded in the said Decrees, yet are so adapted (as I may so say) to the general design and purport of them, and so useful for the Propagation, and Establishment of that Religion, which is instituted there, that they have been observ'd at all times, and every where throughout the whole Christian World, and for that reason are still to be observ'd by all Churches, that are desirous of holding

a firm Union, and Communion with the Universal. For if any Church shall abolish any one of these Rites, or constitute any thing contrary to them, the same will thereby be depriv'd of that Custom, which all the other Churches of God enjoy. Which thing the Apostle charges the *Corinthians* with as a fault. And deservedly too. Because it can't possibly be deem'd at least a lesser Crime to disannul the common Rites of the Universal Church, than to violate the Common Law of the Realm. That this is great, 'tis generally acknowledg'd, and some to their own Cost have found it so.

But perhaps some will judge me guilty of a fault, in pleading hitherto for Rites, and not shewing what they are, or how to know them. But truly this don't belong to me, who have hitherto design'd nothing more, than to demonstrate, how just, and equitable it is, that (for instance) our, or any other Provincial Church, shou'd religiously observe all such Rites, which, 'tis certain, all other Churches have observ'd: Now what peculiar Rites ought to be rank'd here, and from whence that appears, I leave undecided to your Judgments. Perchance some of them will be debated before you: For that reason I've forbore mentioning the least of them in this place, for fear I shou'd seem to anticipate your more discerning Judgments in these Affairs. But there are some general Customs of the Universal Church, which (if I mistake not) are indisputable, and yet seem momentous to the determining such cases

cases as will be laid open in this Sacred Synod: Therefore I can't quite pass them by, lest I shou'd seem to fall short of performing the duty laid on me.

First, Therefore all the Churches of God have this Custom, and always had, that in whatsoever Province they are plac'd, the Bishops, and Pastors of that Province, as often as occasion requires, and opportunity permits, may hold Synods or Sacred Conventions to deliberate, and consult about affairs relating to the Church in the same Province. Which therefore are call'd Synods, Convocations, or Provincial Councils. This sufficiently appears from those huge and numerous volumes of Councils, in which you may see several such like Councils held in all Ages, and all Provinces over the whole Christian world. And far more, doubtless, are celebrated, that are neither extant there, nor in any other place at present. Which, I thought fit to note here, that any one may plainly see, that this our Synodical Convocation is no Innovation. Because nothing was ever more usual in all the Churches of God than the celebration of such Provincial Councils.

Add to this, that all Churches every where so Synodically congregated, were always us'd to make such Canons, or Ecclesiastick Laws, as they judg'd to be Expedient for the better administration of the

the publick Worship of God, his Word and Sacraments, and the Discipline of the whole Church. This also abundantly appears from the said Acts of Councils: In which there are divers Canons set forth by every Provincial Church, as proper, and peculiar to it self. For tho' all the Churches of God in common have scrupulously retain'd the rites of the Universal; yet they were always forc'd Canonically to super-add others, that were adapted to the form and modes of that Kingdom or Province, wherein each Church was situated. Otherwise it were almost impossible for any Provincial or National Church to subsist long in Peace. From hence also a common Custom has obtain'd in all the Churches of God, when all such Canons, and Laws are Constituted, to have regard not only to the well-being of any private member, but also to the Peace, and due order of the whole Church. And indeed many things are necessary to the procuring this, that are not to our obtaining everlasting felicity. For which reason almost all the Canons, publish'd hitherto by Provincial, or General Councils are instituted only for such things, that make for the external Discipline, and Peace of the Church. And hence 'tis also, that never any Church was extant, which did not register several things amongst their Laws, not against, but besides those things, which are contain'd in holy Writ. Which is so clear, and perspicuous, that I can't enough wonder, how it came into any ones mind to doubt of the truth thereof.

Besides



Besides 'tis customary in all the Churches of God to ratify such Canons, as they make, with Ecclesiastick Penances, to prevent impunity, when they are violated. This likewise appears from the Canons of all the Councils, upon which a man can scarce cast his eye, but presently at the first sight see Suspension, or Deposition denounc'd against Clergy-men, Anathema, or Excommunication against Lay-men, if they shall act otherwise. For neither has the Church ever esteem'd those worthy of the Sacred Ministry, nor these of her Communion, who refuse to obey Laws written as well for their, as its own advantage.

Further 'tis evident out of the aforesaid Collection of Councils, that all the Churches of God were wont so to frame, and temper these Laws, which they thought necessary for themselves, that they might be advantageous to, and edifying of the whole Community, and as much as possible, offensive to none. I said, as much as possible, by reason the ignorance of some is such, that they scarce are sensible of any thing: Such is the perverseness of others, that they wrest all to the worst sense. And truly 'tis hardly possible for any Civil Law, much less Ecclesiastical, to be so made, as to be altogether approv'd by them. Therefore there's no reason, that the Church shou'd be solicitous for this sort of men, unless perhaps, that they may be better taught in discipline and manners by the force of the Laws. Now, others there are, who endeavour to serve God piously, and

and devoutly, and to direct their lives according to his Commands, and yet are of so weak, and Scrupulous a Conscience, that nothing almost can be done, that do's not give offence to them, and that too (as we should charitably believe) not from an obstinacy of will, or stiff inclination to any Faction, but from some pious, tho' groundless fear, lest it should be displeasing to God. And truly these men are to be taken into consideration, when Laws are making, especially Ecclesiastick, lest new Scruples should be implanted in their Minds, but rather let the old ones be eradicated. And that also, whether they, who labour under this weakness of Conscience, Serve God together with the Church, or separately from it. For both are to be taken care of; these, that they may persevere in the Communion of our Church, the other, that they may be brought back to it. And certainly this is a work, and labour, deserving the cares and studies of us all. Which nevertheless is to be so enterpriz'd, that nothing, for their sakes, may be omitted, that shall redound to the Interest of the Church, nor admitted, that shall prove detrimental to the same. For neither reason, nor the perpetual Custom of the Church suffers a part to be preferable to the whole.

We may add further, That nothing has been more usual amongst the Churches of God, than to change Laws, that they've made, to abrogate ancient



ancient ones; and to substitute others, perhaps quite different, in their room, when necessity and time require it. None conversant in Ecclesiastick Histories can be ignorant of this. For you can find no Church throughout the World, that has all the same Laws now, which it formerly had. Doubtless, all such Laws of Provincial Churches, whereof we now speak, are constituted *pro hic & nunc*, (if I may be allow'd to speak barbarously here) that is, with respect to time, and place. When these are chang'd, the Laws of Necessity must be chang'd for their accommodation to the present Customs of every Age and Place.

But truly no Church ever did, or must do this without mature Deliberation, and cogent Necessity. For every unnecessary alteration in Ecclesiastick Laws, stigmatizes the Church with inconstancy; and too much derogates from the Authority given it by our Blessed Saviour, it makes Prophane Wretches call Religion into Question, whether or no it depends on the Will of Man? It sets several together by the ears; and keeps more still in a dubious expectation of some new attempt: It renders the minds of others doubtful, and uncertain what to do: It stirs up outrageous Tumults, and often embroils the Publick Peace. Neither also is any one so Skilful in the disposal, and provision of things, as to be

able to foresee by any Art, what, and how great Miseries may be arising even from the mutation of Laws incommodious. And therefore the changing of ancient Laws for others, is at all times dangerous, unless such Necessity may compel; as is otherwise insuperable; and which is so manifest and apparent to the eyes of all, that none may see a change, without seeing great Reason, and Necessity for it.

Now if there be such a Necessity, all those Commotions will be averted, that generally attend an unnecessary change. The Church will not lose a drachm of Honour or Esteem, that's due to her. For she, and her Authority will be the same. And all things will appear more peaceable, calm, fix'd, and quiet in her, than if they had kept their former State. All the Churches of God are taught this by Experience: And for this reason they never scruple to repeal Laws of their own Constitution, and to make new ones, as often as they see occasion.

But whether our Church be now oblig'd by such a Necessity to alter any thing that's settled by her Laws, belongs to Wise Men, not me, to determine. This only I'll presume to say, that, if it be necessary, to bring back stray'd Sheep to Christ's Fold, if necessary, to remove Scruples from the Consciences

Consciences of weak Brethren: If necessary, to extinguish Hatred, mitigate Anger, and reconcile all Differences, as far as possible, about Religion: If necessary, to restore Ecclesiastick Discipline to its pristine vigour: If necessary, to defend, and maintain the best Church on Earth against the Efforts of Men, and Devils: I say, If any one thinks these necessary; certainly he must likewise think it necessary to admit of such Alterations as in his Opinion are most conducive to this end: Whilst only these things are chang'd, which our Church has constituted by her Authority, not those, which the Universal Church has Establish'd by her Common Law. For all the Churches of God, and ours too, have always religiously forborn, (let the presence be what it will) the least Alteration in these Laws. For to abolish, or reject what has been always, and every where observ'd, is not only to change an Ecclesiastick Rite, but also the Church it self, and render it different from all the other Churches of God. Which yet never cou'd, nor, I hope, ever will be said of our Church,

For truly such was the care, and diligence of our Reformers, (whose happy memory we can never sufficiently extol, and reverence) such their Piety and Religion, such their divinely inspir'd Prudence, that, thinking it as necessary to keep firm Communion with the Catholick, as to recede from the *Roman Church*, renouncing all her new

invented Ceremonies, they themselves religiously preserv'd whatever had been approv'd by all the Churches of God, and so have drawn in our Church, the most illustrious Image and Resemblance of the Catholick. And hence 'tis that the Church of *England* has always been the envy of the *Roman*: But so great an honour to all the Reformed Churches, that I don't doubt, but that they wou'd imitate her pious Examples, were it in their power: So that we must not impute it to them, but to the necessities of times, and places, that they are not in all things agreeable to us.

Since therefore God has committed such a Church to our care; and since his Vicegerent here has now given us an opportunity to prosecute all things, that may tend to the peace, and advantage of this Church, let us employ all our powers and faculties for its accomplishment. Let us leave no means unattempted, to make all English-men to be of the Church of *England*. Let us endeavour all we can, to make her Faith, her Worship, and her Discipline, if possible, the wonder of the whole world: and she her self perpetual, by whose guidance we of this Kingdom may obtain everlasting Salvation thro' Christ, at his second coming. That all posterity may laud, and magnifie God, that our most religious King assembled this Sacred Synod, and appointed so great a preparation for it, in order to the future  
advan-

advantage of this our Church. If this Convocation shall be so pleas'd, to whose disposal all things are left.

But whilst we are considering of these things, let us call to mind the ancient Customs observ'd by all God's Churches, in the calm and sedate Celebration of their Synods: And let ours take example by that. Let us lay by all prepossessed Opinions, presumptuous Suspitions, litigious Contentions, and whatsoever may confound and disturb so Sacred Councils. But let all be done with that Concord, and Unanimity which becomes Christians, Clergy-men, which becomes the Clergy of *England*, (I say) which becomes the whole Clergy of *England*, when they consult about the Establishment of the Peace of the Church of *England*. Whatsoever we do, let it be done by universal Approbation, That in this we may truly say with the Apostle, *If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.*

But whatsoever pains we take for the good of our Church they'll avail not, unless adorn'd with good works: Wherefore most Reverend Fathers in Christ, and dearly beloved Brethren give me leave to beseech you in the name of Christ, so to comport yourselves, as Becomes Fathers, and Sons of so holy a Church: *Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father in Heaven?*

Heaven? Let all see and admire the eminent Sanctity of the Church of England in producing Members of all men the most holy. By this means we shall engage not only men, but God to be of our side. Who alone is able to protect, and for ever preserve a Church fast of his own building, and then restoring, from all the Machinations of its enemies.

Let God therefore arise, and his enemies be scatter'd. God grant, that our Church, or rather his, planted within this Realm, may flourish and increase daily more and more. God grant, that the Gates of Hell may never prevail against it. Lastly, God grant, that his most holy Spirit may guide this Sacred Synod conven'd in his Name, and lead them into all truth, that whatsoever they do, may end in the glory of God, the good and settlement of the Universal Church, and more especially, of this of England, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father, and holy Spirit be ascrib'd all glory, and honour now and evermore, Amen.

A

FINIS.



2. Canyon Park.